



CANADIAN  
FOUNDATION FOR  
CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT  
AND INNOVATION

Dear Friends,

October 29th is the one year anniversary of the installation of the first of sixty-two Living Memorial Stones, the project I conceived to honor the murdered and missing. Giving names back to your loved ones was a way of keeping their memories alive. With each stone, there was a backstory, and I'm eternally grateful that you let me into your life, I like to think that it offers some solace to know your mothers, daughters, sisters and cousins aren't going to be forgotten.

I often think of my own sister, Dawn who passed away on February 28, 2005 of a drug overdose here in Vancouver. My sister was Aboriginal, adopted, and had a hard time living between two worlds - the world my adopted parents gave to her and the world where she was abused sexually before being given up for adoption. Dawn suffered from depression and often felt she didn't belong. On the night of her death she went to a party, used cocaine, came home, took sleeping pills and never woke up. She died alone only to be found days later when her roommate returned home from an extended trip.

My sister's loss had a profound impact on me. Like Dawn, I too often felt I didn't belong. Some of you may know my past, that at the age of sixteen I ran away from home to New York City. I arrived January 15, 1990 with ninety Canadian dollars and two suitcases. The stark reality of my situation upon arriving was of being homeless, sleeping on the Subway at night or in the tunnels, of stealing food and clothing in order to survive. It took me many years to break the cycle of poverty and misery. In many respects, I'm still trying to break that cycle.

In one of my past lectures at S.F.U. we were asked if we are a product of our environment. A caged animal becomes a product of his environment; mankind however builds his environments to suit his needs. If someone claims that you are a product of your environment, it means the environment you live in, has become your accepted norm, and now it influences you, rather than you influencing it.

Since establishing my non-profit society in Vancouver, I've worked hard to address a lot of issues and highlight social injustice through art. I've invested a lot of my own funds, I never wanted to be accused of profiting off women or wading into a controversy because of financial issues.

In my first year, I paid out of my pocket \$17,280.50 to support the work the society accomplished. This year, I've spent \$14,985.79 of my income to keep the society alive. This is not sustainable, and while I have subsidized my non-profit by working a full-time job in order to keep CFCDI going, recent events in my life have led me to make the decision to dissolve the society.

The City of Vancouver has the stones and I am told that they have a team that are working to place the stones. I'm writing to you (the families) to ask if one of you would have the time to assist me in seeing this project through. There is no additional cost as the stones have been paid for and the City is doing the work for free. I would just need someone to help with the honoring aspect of the project once each stone is in place liaison with the City and handle any press related matters. I like to hold an unveiling when each stone is placed. This project and many like them have been restorative in nature and have helped me address my issues and for that I'm eternally grateful.

If you have any questions, my email is always [sean@cfcdi.ca](mailto:sean@cfcdi.ca)

warm regards,

Sean